



Faith Community Church
Declared Innocent
(Psalms, Part 3)

Faith Group Questions
& Discussion Guide



Opening Prayer: Ask God to grant us the humility to see our own hearts and forgive those who have sinned against us.

Facilitator Note: The goal of this session is to move past the surface level and talk honestly about the pain of being wronged, our natural tendencies to take control, and the radical freedom found in Christ's forgiveness.

Icebreaker: What is an example of "slander" you've heard in the news recently?

Key Points

1. **God sees and deeply cares about every injustice you experience.** He is neither distant nor unaware when others misrepresent your character or intentions.
2. **True trust means choosing the "fourth way" over our survival instincts.** Instead of lashing out (fight), running away (flight), or shutting down (freeze), faith invites us to hand control over to God.
3. **Spiritual maturity requires the courage to let God examine our hidden motives.** We must care more about our own holiness and blind spots than we do about obsessing over or fixing the wrongs committed against us.
4. **The cross of Jesus completely settles the score- for us and for those who sin against us.** We are freed from the burden of seeking retaliation or withholding our love.

Discussion Questions

1. Did you audit and elevate your speech, practice the names of God, or worship the Creator through creation last week? Tell us about it!
2. When you look at the natural human responses to being wronged—fight, flight, or freeze—to which one do you typically default, and what does that reaction usually look like in your life? (Optional Case studies: Judges 14:18-20; Jonah 1:1-3; Rev 3:14-17)
3. Pastor mentioned that one way we try to control painful situations is by withdrawing our love. Why do you think withholding love (the cold shoulder or silent treatment) is such a tempting way to punish people? (2 Cor 2:5-8)

4. David boldly prayed, *"Put me on trial, LORD, and cross-examine me."* What makes that a terrifying prayer to pray, and what holds us back from being that transparent with God? (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Psalm 139:4)
5. Think about someone who asks a Christian friend, *"Tell me something I don't know about myself."* How would your life or relationships change if you had the humility to ask that of the people who love you most? (Prov 27:6)
6. The sermon points out that "whatever you focus on, you strengthen." How have you seen a hyper-focus on *avoiding* a certain sin or negative behavior actually make it harder to overcome? (Where we should look: Colossians 3:1-2, Philippians 4:8)
7. David's love for the sanctuary wasn't about the building; it was about the Person *in* the building. How can we shift our daily routines from just "doing religious things" to actively pursuing the presence of God? (Mark 12:30, 1 John 3:18)
8. Knowing that Jesus already paid the absolute highest price on the cross for the specific ways people have sinned against you, how does that truth change the way you view the people who owe you an apology? (Hebrews 10:11-14, Matthew 18:23-35)

Practical Applications

1. **Take a 24-Hour "Defense Fast":** The next time you are misunderstood, inconvenienced, or criticized this week, commit to not defending yourself for 24 hours. Instead, take that time to pray: *"Lord, You are my light and my salvation; You are the defender of my life."*
2. **Invite a Blind-Spot Check:** Identify one trusted person in your life—a spouse, a close friend, or a mentor who loves the Lord—and ask them this specific question: *"Is there a blind spot or something about my character that I don't see, but you do?"* Listen with an open heart without trying to defend yourself.
3. **Release a Debt to the Cross:** Write down the name of someone who has slandered, betrayed, or hurt you, along with the "debt" they owe you (e.g., an apology, a restored reputation, vindication). Pray over that paper, acknowledging that Jesus paid that debt on the cross, and then physically destroy or erase the paper as a symbol of letting Christ settle the score.

Closing Prayer: Father, You see all, and You have already both declared me innocent and settled the score for sins committed against me. Help me to trust You completely, and be humble enough to both accept Your discipline and extend Your forgiveness.